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RS: Quite honestly, commercial fishing is becoming a dieing occupation as far as I'm concerned. There are very few young people like myself that are buying boats and getting into it. Most I would say, 9 of 10 people that I talk to are old times that they don't understand why we are restricted. They don't buy into sustainable fishing. I'm the first person in my family to ever fish. I graduated high school with a 3.93 cumulative but I knew this is what I wanted to do. I mean I just, this is what I wanted to do. I started on the charter boats taking people out fishing when I was in high school and I just love the water. I'm a rafting guy also during the summers, and something about the water...to me it's the most powerful force in this world. It will take you whenever it's time to take you. And so I chose to do this but yeah, like I said, 9 out of 10 people that I talk to are old timers. It's kinda a bummer. Because you'll have young guys that have worked on boats for years but they see the restrictions and then they hear their old timer skipper just bitching and moaning, sorry, about how we're restricted. I'm very big on sustainable fishing. I make a lot of money off of salon. This year was restricted, you know it was pretty restricted because of you know, impacts. I do my guiding down there on the forks of the Sacramento River so I always know about snow pack and what we are expecting to be able to guide rafting trips down there. So that in-turn, turns over to salmon and these guys just dont get it. Me being the first person in my family to fish, if my kids decide they want to fish, I want there to be fish around. If it was still going wide open, and lets just kill everything, theres nothing.

DC: Yeah, I couldn't state it better

RS: [laughing] So yeah.

DC: So then why don't you give me your full story of how you decided fishing was for you?

RS: I've always been, I was raised as a sport hunter, fisher, you know, in the woods or on a lake or in a river fishing and hunting. I got to high school there and I think I was a sophomore, and I was really good buddies with a senior and it was his last summer working on a charter boat and he's like "Dude, you'd be great at this." And so I went down there and I talked to Wayne and they own Prowler charters down there out of Bandon and I mean it just, it was just awesome. I'm a people person which is why I guide and so I just, being out there on the ocean at the mercy of something I couldnt control was just too much to pass up. Might sound sick but [chuckles]. I mean really, it was just for me and I did that for a few years, graduated, and got on my first commercial fishing boat. I literally had more time on the ocean than my first commercial skipper. So that was kind of a learning process for him and myself. And I just fell in love with it. I just want to be on the water all the time. So that's what I chose to do. My family is all "Buba your so smart, your so smart! You should have gone to college!" Right well I know so many people that went to college for 4-8 years and as soon as they got out they hate what they are doing. I wake up every single morning and I just can't wait to do what I do. I can't. When the weather is blowing and I've got a week off, I go absolutley ballistic. I have a hard time not being on the water. And my daughter, she's 3, she loves to come and watch me unload and she wants to touch the fish. I take her to lakes and she catches her own fish. I mean she loves everything about it. My sone, he is 7 months now and I hope he gets that same love for what I do. But I just, if like I said, if they so choose to do what I do then I want to leave that legacy, if you will, for them.

DC: Well you'r a very upbeat guy for a man who just lugged so many crab pots all day!

RS: [laughing] I know! I'm tired, I'm hurting. I had back surgery 2 years ago and I'm not supposed to be doing what I did today but it had to be done. It's...yeah [chuckles]. But I should be able to get all 300 [pots] down there by tomorrow. After this interview and after I drop off this last load I'm done for the day. I'm calling it [chuckles]

DC: Good! You deserve it [chuckling] So what about your wife? or girlfriend? Is she involved in any of the industry?

RS: Well not really. I mean she supports me and everything I want to do. Owning my own boat has not been easy. People think because you get a \$4,000 check in a week that it's all going into your bank account. Until I get our first boat payed off, it's been a struggle. But she is, she's a home maker. She's a stay at home mom, which is huge for me because in today's society both parents work in most relationships and you have got daycare kids basically. You have somebody else raising your kids. So it's really really, it makes me work and drive harder everyday to make sure that my kids aren't going to be daycare kids, if you will. They get to have that mom time and when I'm there, they get to, when the weather does blow for a week we get to just take off and go camping. Go up to the woods. I just took my daughter deer hunting this weekend. And she has her own play set of binoculars and the whole time she is just [enacts his daughter looking vigilantly around]. I mean the world to me to be able to provide for my family through fishing. I consider commercial fishermen one of the last hunter gatherers, if you will. Every day I go out I know that my product is feeding people. And that's an awesome feeling. It really is.

DC: Fantastic! So have you seen any changes since you got into fishing?

RS: Not really. Not really. Like I said, this year, I've owned the boat for coming on 5 years now. And so there was a few years where, I'm a pretty good salmon fisherman. That's what I was doing when I was working off the charter boat in high school. He did the salmon fish and his dad did the bottom fishing trips and quite honestly the last few years have been pretty wide open, unrestricted as far as salmon goes. And our impact on the Klamath river, which was the first river to shut us down years ago, I think when I was 19 or 20, and then the Sacramento River, but our impact on those 2 rivers...I think last year we had 7 percent impact. Oregon. State wide. 7% impact. So it's just, no other than changes, like I said, there's not a whole lot of young fellas trying to get into it. But sustainable fishing, that's the change I've seen and I'm on board. I want those fish to be around for as long as I'm fishing and if my kids want to fish.

DC: Good to hear. So why don't you think people are getting into it?

RS: Because a lot of young fellas listen to their skipper bitching and moaning up there in the cabin about "back in my day, back in my day..." They hear too many 'back in my day' stories and you just...diversify. I mean, I've got a live fish permit that I didn't really have to use for the last few years because salmon was so good. But this year I depended on it a lot. And then I don't have my own crab permit yet but, so you go to crab though, you go to black cod, I get my open access. [takes drink of water] I'm so tired! [chuckles]

DC: I don't know how your still talking! If I had a day like yours I would have fallen asleep by now [chuckling]

RS: But not really. I haven't seen any major changes personally. Not that I pay attention to. I show up to my boat when it's time to fish. I go fishing. I feel like I know everybody down there at the dock but then you were saying that there's a pair of people that I don't know. You know I'm not down there to, when I show up at 4 o'clock in the morning there's a lot of guys that are going "oh we are going to look at it." Well if I show up at 4 o'clock in the morning and I have the guys out of bed that early, we're going. That's just how I work [chuckling]. Changes...not really. Not that I pay attention to. Changes for better if you will. I mean the only changes that they do every year, they change quotas due to sustainable fishing, you know. That type of deal.

DC: Did you have any barriers to entering the industry? or getting permits? or getting your boat?

RS: No, I didn't. I work hard. So going from deck hand, to skipper, to boat owner took a year and a half. I mean it was...I don't, I did good in school. It was, to me it was just what I knew I wanted to do and I wanted to be my own boss and set my own schedule and provide.

DC: Great! It's good to hear that. So do you have any stories from fishing? Any highs or lows of your career that you would like to share?

RS: You know, I got asked that last year cause they interviewed me for the Dungeon Cove thing and I just really the bad times you have just gotta put aside. You pretty much just, you've gotta forget about it. And I have. I could not think of, well I could think of a couple where I was, my wife and I were just dating and I took her on a tuna trip and it was supposed to be just beautiful weather for 3 or 4 days and that lasted for like a day and a half. And we were coming in from 60 miles out, we're coming in and all 3, well my 2 deck hands and her were all down in the bunks sharing a bucket throwing up, and that was probably one of the scariest 18 hours of my life. Because I couldn't just run straight to Orford. I had to basically time the series even way out there. I would cut in toward shore and then I would have to buck into it on the big ones. You know, so...I have my soon to be wife on board and I was terrified. But you can't let your crew know that. Last year I was crabbing and it was a 32-foot boat and I crab an area that most people don't crab for a couple months into the season because it's just not a little boat area. But if you're smart about it and you can make it work, and there's a lot of crabs. But we are coming back through, a 32-foot boat, it was 18-foot swell with 4 or 5 feet of wind wave on top of it and we came down off of one and we just, the whole side of the boat hit the bottom and just shattered the jig poles. I was running my floppers which, you know, keep you fairly, it just takes a lot of the roll out of it. Well when that thing shattered, there is no more flopper now and that's on the side of the boat where the weather's coming from and it was not an exciting 2 hours coming back home. It, I thought that was, I thought that was going to be it. But I ended up, I got the guys out there. I just kept my cool and told them what to do and we got it all figured out and I just slowly got my way back to port and... So yeah there's...I put the boat, I don't know if you've, have you been down to Orford? [DC: Mhmm [nodding]] Okay, so last year was real shallow. A couple years, the 2 years prior to that I had kinda gotten out of the habit of teaching my, training my guys to "hey let me know if there's a big swell coming in" or a big surge coming in. So anyway, we unloaded and we were pulling up to the hook that lifts us out and a surge comes through and there is nothing I could do. The nose hit the beach and now we are way out there and the boat, somebody has got the video. They put it on Facebook before I could even see it. We are taking breakers side to side on the beach, just rolling. Yeah. There's, the next day was super, super nice weather. Every body's like "well are you going tomorrow?" and I'm like "Yeah! Hell yeah I'm going tomorrow!" I started driving down dock road there and I was just like [re-enacts deep breathing while driving] I was just uncontrollable. I got down there I said "hey guys I'm not okay. We're not going today" even though it was a nice day for crabbing. I couldn't do it.

DC: I'm sure they understood.

RS: They did! I mean they both thanked me. Not because they were scared but because I was honest with them and told them. And nobody even knew how shaken up I was until I finally, its counter intuitive in the fact that if you get to the beach like that you don't try to back up because it's just pushing sand up. So your actually in forward trying to dig a hole and I mean it took probably 40, 45 minutes to finally work the stern over far enough to get a lifting strap hooked up and then we worked it out. I just stayed calm and once they swung us to the side there and started lifting us up, I was up at the bow at that point, I had a meltdown. I sat down and I just started balling. Because not as much because I was scared but I could have killed 2 other people. And that weighed on me way more than my own personal safety. But oh year. I lost my shit [chuckling] I was 45 minutes of telling people this and that, keeping my calm. And then we start getting lifted up and are safe now and I just broke down.

DC: Well that's a much better time to break down than during.

All: [laughing]

RS: Right! There's a lot of, there's a lot of little stories like that, but really if you keep those in your memory. I mean their all learning lessons but you can't stew on them. You have kinda gotta push them to the back or you're not going to do what we do.

DC: Wow! With that in mind what's the most challenging aspect of being a fisherman?

RS: Being away from my family. Being away from my kids is hard. Every time I've gotta leave the house it's just...because you do, we're taking risk's every day. Even on flat calm oceans. There's boats going down all the time. And so every time I've gotta hug my kids and say dad's gotta go to work, and Bidy, I call her Bidy, her name is Madeline, she "well why do you have to go fishing?" "Well so we can go do fun things." She's like "well I hope you get them dad!" And it just, leaving my kids is the hardest part of fishing for me. It's...I don't want their mom to ever have to explain why dad's not coming home again.

DC: I have heard that from a lot of people. That having to leave their family, I couldn't imagine. My goodness. Since we are on the topic of your children, do you think you would encourage them to go into fishing? Or do you think...

RS: If that's what they want to do, yeah. I mean being your own boss and being [phone rings - takes call and has to leave interview to meet crew soon]

DC: We can run through these very quickly. We are nearly done. So what attracts people to the business these days?

RS: The idea of grander. The excitement. I mean, I guess you can make good money doing it if you want to work hard and try. But a lot of young people don't. They're work ethic anymore is, that, its, they're not about to break their back to go to work. And so that's kinda the problem, is theirs not a whole lot of people choosing to do it. It's kind of "oh well I've been out of work for this long and there's an opportunity on this boat" but they don't go anywhere with it. They will do their 6-month season and their like "that wasn't for me. It was a lot of work." Well it's time to buck up, you know? I mean you've gotta grow up at some point dude. Plain and simple. I don't know what's attracting young people

because I don't see a lot of young people really coming into it. Granted, Port Orford is a small port and the work pool around there is pretty derlicked. [chuckles] There's, it's tough to find somebody worth a darn down there. Places up here, you know, they probably do better in getting some of the young fellers on the boats and doing it. But they don't, like I said, they still have the skipper in their ear "well back in my day...Back in my day...we killed everything..."

DC: SO do you think there's opportunity in Port Orford for young people?

RS: Mhmm. There's opportunity everywhere for young people. Quite honestly Port Orford is a great place for a young person to start because it's a little boat port. You buy yourself a little boat and a couple permits and there is some amazing fishing around there for little boats, and then you decide if you want to get bigger or just do what you're doing out of Orford. Orford is a great place for people to start.

DC: What about the ageing of people. Or that's what it sounds like your seeing. Let me know if I'm incorrect. But it sounds like your seeing people kind of aging along and a lack of young people coming in. What do you think, what type of impact is that going to have on Port Orford?

RS: On Orford?...Well I've done a lot of work in Orford in far as I got my brother running a boat now and I've got 2 other people about my age, one bought a boat, and ones running a boat now. So I'm doing my darnedness in Orford to get people into it. Places like this, I don't know how they work. I just don't. You've gotta give these young kids a reason to get off the video controllers and go out and work. But it's not, I mean it's not just because it's fishing. I see say heavy equipment operating, or logging, there's a lot of professions like that that are just not seeing the young kids getting into it because it involves work. Darn [chuckles] I don't know. A lot of people want to sit behind a computer. They want those jobs now and it's just, I'm pretty sure I was born in the wrong century. But it's the simple fact. Kids just don't want to work anymore. And I'm only 32 so I call kids, it's ridiculous. I see some 20-year old and I'm like "ehh kid" oh man I'm getting old [chuckles]

DC: So then what kind of impact do you think it will have on fishing as a whole? Like the fishing culture in Port Orford?

RS: Well it's supply and demand. Less people doing it, less product coming in, price goes up. That's just how supply and demand works. So I don't think it would ever affect me. But it's just, like I said, the hunter gatherer thing. That is something that's really, really cool. I think. Providing for other people. Giving the man the fish. But I love to teach the man to fish too. So it's, as far as impact on me, now that I've done, that I've started in this direction, it won't have any impact on me.

DC: What happens to the boats and the knowledge that these older generations, when they time out where does it go?

RS: A lot of them are taking it to the grave. I've kept a notebook, a yearly notebook of what I'm fishing for, where I'm fishing. There's a lot of old timers that did that or used to do that but they have almost given up too. They don't want to put time into some young fella that's not going anywhere. That's not ready or will never be ready. So a lot of that knowledge is going to go away.

DC: What about the boats?

RS: The boats...firewood. I don't know. I drive through a lot of these ports that there's some nice boats that just, nobodies there to run them anymore so they are just sitting there rotting on land. You drive down to Charleston and go through their boat yard. I mean there's a lot of old decrepit boats, mind you, but there's boats that I'm just like, "dang I like that hull. I want to rebuild that boat." You know this and that. But I'm one person and there's lots of boats that are just firewood.

DC: Okay, last question. I know you have to get out of here. Do you think there's a tipping point where once the fleet has aged to a certain point or a point the industry can't come back from in Port Orford? Is there that point? A point of no return?

RS: No. no. I don't think so. I've been asked by a lot of the old timers out of Orford, the guys that are on the crab commission, and the guy that I've been crabbing his boat for the last couple years. He's still going to the council meetings 4 times a year. Guys are constantly asking me to get on these boards. Get on these councils. Go to these meetings. Well like I said, I'm still just 32. I just want to fish. I want to fish. I don't want to take a week off of fishing because I have got to go to a meeting. You know? So the tipping point would be at the...at a certain point I am going to have to buck up and do it. Guys like me that really care about what we are doing and want to see it continue. We are, the younger generation is going to have to get involved in the politics. That sounds horrible [chuckling] It really does. You know I just...to me it's, I'm not out there to try to change anything majorly. I'm not, like I said, sustainable fishing, right now I personally believe that, I'm not a big advocate of big government and them taking over everything but they are doing a pretty alright job right now making sure that those fish stay around forever. It's that day and age.

[someone walks into room - quick discussion]

RS: So the tipping point would just be basically be young fellas not getting into the politics of it. And at some point I'm going to have to get into it and I'm not looking forward to that.

DC: Yeah, it's not always the most exciting.

RS: Yeah, it doesn't seem like it is [chuckling]

DC: Well that's what I had for you. We kind of blew through those quickly but you touch on everything I was hoping to get through so you are one of my most efficient interviews

RS: Oh perfect!

DC: So thank you!

[end 0:33:38]